

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

An improved surgical retraction apparatus (and corresponding method of operation) includes a plurality of rigid retraction members disposed about a central axis that move radially with respect to the central axis between a closed state and an open state. In the closed state, the retraction members form a central opening that is adapted to closely fit around the tubular section of a surgical port device. In the illustrative embodiments, a planetary gear train, cable assemblies and lever arms may be used to control radial movement of the retraction members with respect to the central axis.